

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 DRC-01 /092 W
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P R 220100Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7783

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 4042

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PGOV PINS MY

SUBJ: MALAYSIAN GENERAL ELECTIONS: CAMPAIGN

ATMOSPHERICS AND FORECAST

REF: A. KL 3803

B. KL A-106, 8/8/74

1. SUMMARY: WITH TWO DAYS TO GO BEFORE ELECTIONS AUG 24, NATIONAL FRONT (NF) REMAINS IN GENERALLY STRONG POSITION NATIONWIDE, ALTHOUGH SOFT SPOTS EXIST IN PENANG, PERAK AND FEDERAL TERRITORY (KUALA LUMPUR) WHERE OPPOSITION CANDIDATES, PARTICULARLY DEMOCRATIC ACTION PARTY (DAP), ARE WAGING GOOD BATTLES. ACCORDING POLITICAL OBSERVERS, THIS YEAR'S CAMPAIGN HAS NOT BEEN NEARLY AS INTENSE AS IN 1960, ALTHOUGH IN PAST WEEK NF LEADERS HAVE HIGHLIGHTED RACIAL ISSUES BY ACCUSING DAP OF SEDITIONARY ACTIVITIES. ALSO, NF LEADERS AND CANDIDATES HAVE
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ATTEMPTED IMPUGN OPPOSITION BY ALLEGING FOREIGN SUPPORT FOR

OPPOSITION PARTIES. SOME NERVOUSNESS IS BEGINNING TO DEVELOP ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR POST-ELECTION COMMUNAL VIOLENCE BUT, BARRING OPPOSITION LANDSLIDE (WHICH APPEARS VERY UNLIKELY), PROGNOSIS IS FOR MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC ORDER. END SUMMARY.

2. CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS: NF BEGAN ELECTION CAMPAIGN TWO WEEKS AGO EMPHASIZING SUCCESS OF GOVT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND POINTING TO LARGE NUMBER OF UNCONTESTED PARLIAMENT AND STATE SEATS (REFTEL) AS EVIDENCE OF PEOPLE'S FAITH IN GOM. NF HAS MADE EXTENSIVE USE OF MEDIA, BOTH TV/RADIO AND PRESS, TO HIGHLIGHT GOVT ACHIEVEMENTS. ON COMMUNAL ISSUES, PRIME MINISTER RAZAK SET TONE FOR NF CANDIDATES BY WARNING THAT GOVT COULD BE FORMED WITHOUT NON-MALAY PARTIES, THUS CHINESE AND INDIANS MUST SUPPORT NF IF MULTI-RACIAL CHARACTER OF GOVT IS TO BE MAINTAINED. RAZAK AND OTHERS HAVE CALLED FOR "100 PERCENT SWEEP" AND HAVE ASSERTED THAT OPPOSITION IN PARLIAMENT AND ASSEMBLIES IS NOT REQUIRED AS NF EMBRACES ALL COMMUNAL AND POLITICAL INTERESTS. WITH MALAY VOTERS, NF HAS EMPHASIZED NEED FOR MALAY UNITY AS FULFILLMENT OF "NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS", BRANDING MALAYS WHO VOTE FOR OPPOSITION AS "TRAITORS" TO THEIR RACE.

3. OPPOSITION SOCIAL JUSTICE PARTY (PEKEMAS) AND DAP HAVE EMPHASIZED NEED TO DEPRIVE NF OF TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT, THEREBY PREVENTING GOVT FROM AMENDING CONSTITUTION WITH IMPUNITY. DAP HAS PUT UP POSTERS, DEEMED SEDITIOUS BY GOVT, SAYING THAT VOTE FOR NF MEANS END OF CHINESE CULTURE AND LANGUAGE. ALSO, DAP HAS REPORTEDLY PRESSED RACIAL THEMES IN HOUSE-TO-HOUSE CAMPAIGNING TO AVOID SCRUTINY BY SECURITY AUTHORITIES. PEKEMAS HAS CAMPAIGNED MAINLY AGAINST DAP AND HAS HAD DIFFICULTY IN FINDING ISSUES (OTHER THAN PARLIAMENT TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY QUESTION) TO FIGHT NF. MALAYAN PEOPLES SOCIALIST PARTY (PSRM), CAMPAIGNING HEAVILY IN TRENGGANU (REFTEL), HAS HIGHLIGHTED ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION IN RURAL AREAS AND FOREIGN DOMINATION OF ECONOMY. SARAWAK NATIONAL PARTY (SNAP) HAS CRITICIZED NF LEADERS, PARTICULARLY SARAWAK CHIEF MINISTER DATUK RAHMAN YA'KUB, FOR "SELF-GLORIFICATION", BUT NF (PESAKA-BUMIPUTRA AND SUPP) HAS COUNTERATTACKED BY CHARGING SNAP WITH DISLOYALTY FOR ITS AL-

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LEGED FAILURE TO TAKE STRONG ANTI-BRUNEI STAND OVER LIMBANG CLAIM. ON WHOLE, HOWEVER, POLITICAL OBSERVERS JUDGE THIS ELECTION CAMPAIGN TO BE LESS INTENSE THAN 1969'S, PRIMARILY DUE TO SHORTER CAMPAIGN PERIOD (REF B, P. 3).

4. COMMUNAL TEMPERATURE: RUMORS OF POST-ELECTION COMMUNAL VIOLENCE ARE BEGINNING TO CIRCULATE BUT HAVE NOT REACHED SAME PITCH AS ON PROPHET MOHAMMED'S BIRTHDAY IN APRIL 1973 WHEN

RACIAL TENSIONS WERE HEIGHTENED WHEN LARGE NUMBER OF NON-MALAYS FAILED MALAY LANGUAGE PORTION OF NATIONAL SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS (SEE KL 1580, 4/17/73 AND RELATED REPORTS). HOWEVER, THERE IS SOME UNEASINESS AND MANY NON-MALAYS PLAN TO KEEP OFF STREETS ON AUG 24 AND SUBSEQUENT DAYS WHILE SOME MALAYS HAVE TAKEN UNSCHEDULED "VACATIONS" OUT OF TOWN. TO GREAT EXTENT, DISCUSSION OF RACIAL ISSUES HAS BEEN INCREASED BY GOVT WARNINGS TO OPPOSITION NOT TO PROVOKE RACIAL FEELINGS AND BY ACCUSATIONS THAT DAP IS RAISING SEDITIOUS ISSUES. POLITICAL OBSERVERS, INCLUDING SOME GOVT OFFICIALS AND NF CANDIDATES, FEEL THAT PM RAZAK AND OTHER LEADERS ARE GIVING MORE CREDENCE AND PUBLICITY TO DAP THAN DESERVED, HEIGHTENING RACIAL FEELINGS IN PROCESS. DESPITE THIS, OUR ASSESSMENT PER REF B REMAINS THAT SIGNIFICANT AND/OR WIDESPREAD RACIAL VIOLENCE IS UNLIKELY UNLESS THERE IS OVERWHELMING OPPOSITION VICTORY (ALSO RATED UNLIKELY) THAT WOULD PROVOKE STRONG REACTION FROM MALAYS.

5. FOREIGN INFLUENCE: IN CAMPAIGNING, NF LEADERS AND CANDIDATES HAVE STATED THAT OPPOSITION PARTIES ARE RECEIVING FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT FROM FOREIGN SOURCES: DAP IS ACCUSED OF HAVING CLOSE LINKS WITH SINGAPORE PAP; SNAP LEADERS ARE ACCUSED OF RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID FROM BRUNEI GOVT; AND INDEPENDENT OPPOSITION CANDIDATES IN KELANTAN ARE ALLEGEDLY RECEIVING AID FROM THAI MUSLIM SOURCES. CANDIDATES HAVE ALSO BEEN ACCUSED OF ACCEPTING AID FROM "SUPER-POWERS" AND THERE ARE EVEN WHISPERS THAT U.S. CIA IS SUPPORTING OPPOSITION. NO CONCRETE EVIDENCE HAS BEEN PRODUCED TO SUPPORT ANY OF THESE ALLEGATIONS, PARTICULARLY RELATING TO ALLEGED BRUNEI AND THAI SUPPORT, AND IT ACKNOWLEDGED BY NF OFFICIALS THAT OPPOSITION FUNDS MAY HAVE BEEN DERIVED FROM LEGITIMATE SOURCES (E.G. BUSINESS BANK ACCOUNTS) IN NEIGHBORING NATIONS. MOREOVER, FINDING FOREIGN BOGEYMEN AND FLOGGING OPPOSITION WITH SUCH ACCUSATIONS HAS BEEN FAIRLY CONSTANT

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FEATURE OF MALAYSIAN ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, ESPECIALLY SINCE SINGAPORE SPLIT IN 1965.

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 4042

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

6. ELECTION FORECAST: NATIONAL FRONT SEEMS TO BE STRONG IN MOST AREAS AND NEAR CLEAN SWEEP IS PREDICTED IN JOHORE, MALACCA (EXCEPT FOR LIM KIT SIANG, DAP SECRETARY-GENERAL), NEGRI SEMBILAN (EXCEPT FOR ONE OR TWO DAP CANDIDATES), SELANGOR, PAHANG, KEDAH AND PERLIS. TUN MUSTAPHA'S UNITED SABAH NATIONAL ORGANIZATION IS LIKELY TO WIN SINGLE CONTESTED PARLIAMENT SEAT IN TUARAN, NORTH OF KOTA KINABALU (PARA 3 REFTTEL). AREAS WHERE NF MIGHT SUFFER SETBACKS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. PERAK AND PENANG: CONSENSUS OF INFORMED OPINION IN THESE STATES IS THAT NON-MALAY PARTIES IN NF (NCA, GERAKAN, PPP AND MIC) WILL DO AS BADLY AS MCA AND MIC DID IN 1969 WHICH WAS ALMOST COMPLETE DEBACLE. IN PERAK, PPP IS LIKELY TO BE WIPED OUT AS A PARTY AND MCA IS VERY WEAK. GERAKAN IN BOTH STATES MAY FARE SOMEWHAT BETTER BUT ABILITY OF GERAKAN CHAIRMAN AND PENANG CHIEF MINISTER DR. LIM CHONG EU TO RETAIN BOTH HIS PARLIAMENTARY AND STATE SEATS IN QUESTIONABLE. NF STRENGTH IN THESE AREAS IS CONFIDENTIAL

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BASED ON UNITY OF MALAY PARTIES, UMNO AND PMIP. AMONG CHINESE-EDUCATED VOTERS, DAP IS ONLY CREDIBLE OPPOSITION AND IS LIKELY TO CAPTURE SUFFICIENT SEATS TO FORM RESPECTABLE MINORITY BLOC IN BOTH STATE ASSEMBLIES. ALSO, DAP MAY PICK UP ONE OR TWO PARLIAMENTARY SEATS IN PERAK BUT THESE MAY NOT BE NET GAIN DUE TO LESS FAVORABLE PROSPECTS IN OTHER AREAS. TOP PEKEMAS LEADERS V. DAVID (ALSO PRESIDENT OF TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION)

AND V. VEERAPPEN HAVE GOOD CHANCE RETAINING THEIR SEATS IN PENANG IN SHARPLY CONTESTED THREE-WAY FIGHTS.

B. KELANTAN: UMNO AND PMIP CANDIDATES STANDING FOR NF ARE FACING CHALLENGE FROM "UNITED INDEPENDENT FRONT" COMPRISED OF 33 INDEPENDENTS CONTESTING STATE AND NATIONAL SEATS. INDEPENDENTS ARE MOSTLY PMIP DEFECTORS WHO OPPOSED UMNO/PMIP COALITION AND SOME HAVE STRONG LOCAL BACKING. HOWEVER, DUE TO LACK OF COHESION WITHIN INDEPENDENT GROUP AND POORLY MANAGED/FINANCED CAMPAIGN, THEY ARE LIKELY TO PICK UP ONLY THREE TO FIVE STATE SEATS. THIS DOES NOT POSE GREAT THREAT TO NF BUT SUCCESSFUL INDEPENDENTS COULD BECOME NUCLEUS OF NEW RIGHT-WING ISLAMIC PARTY.

C. TRENGGANU: NF IS PACING STRONG CHALLENGE FROM PSRM (PARA 5 REFTTEL) BUT NF OFFICIALS CONSIDER THAT PSRM MAY NET ONLY ONE TO THREE STATE SEATS AND NO PARLIAMENTARY SEATS. HOWEVER, MOOD OF TRENGGANU VOTERS IS SO UNPREDICTABLE THAT PSRM MAY DO SOMEWHAT BETTER DESPITE HEAVY CAMPAIGNING THERE BY EVERY NATIONALLY-KNOWN UMNO AND PMIP FIGURE.

D. FEDERAL TERRITORY: NF OFFICIALS REPORTEDLY CONCEDE ALL BUT ONE OF FIVE SEATS IN THIS TRADITIONAL OPPOSITION STRONGHOLD. ONLY SAFE SEAT FOR NF IS IN HEAVILY MALAY AREA; DAP IS MAKING STRONG BIDS AGAINST FAIRLY WEAK MCA AND MIC CANDIDATES IN TWO OTHER CONSTITUENCIES. DR. TAN CHEE KHOON, PEKEMAS CHAIRMAN, SEEMS ASSURED OF REELECTION BUT DOWNTOWN KL CONSTITUENCY NOW HELD BY YEOH TECK CHYE COULD GO TO EITHER NF OR DAP IN PART BECAUSE OF YEOH'S RECENT DEFEAT IN UNION ELECTIONS (KL 4022).

E. SARAWAK: OPPOSITION SNAP HAS GOOD CHANCE TO IMPROVE ITS POSITION, SLIGHTLY INCREASING NUMBER OF STATE SEATS AND INCREASING PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION FROM EIGHT TO PERHAPS TEN. ISSUES IN SARAWAK CONTEST ARE MOSTLY LOCAL BUT SNAP HAS CONFIDENTIAL

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EFFECTIVELY ARGUED THAT STRONG TWO-PARTY SYSTEM (SNAP VERSUS PESAKA-BUMIPUTRA AND SUPP COALITION) SHOULD BE MAINTAINED.

7. OVERALL, COMPOSITION OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENT IS EXPECTED TO BE MUCH AS IT IS TODAY WITH OPPOSITION CONTROLLING APPROX 26 SEATS. IN ENLARGED LOWER HOUSE (DEWAN RAKYAT) OF 156 SEATS, NF WOULD THUS HAVE BETTER THAN DESIRED TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY BUT, AT SAME TIME, OPPOSITION WOULD HAVE CREDIBLE (ALTHOUGH BY NO MEANS UNITED) PRESENCE. WITH REGARD TO FUTURE LINE-UP IN CABINET (WHICH MANY OBSERVERS EXPECT WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN CONNECTION WITH NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS AUG 31), CURRENT ELECTION CONTEST WILL SORT OUT RELATIVE STRENGTHS OF NON-MALAY PARTNERS IN NATIONAL FRONT AND ALLOCATION OF PORTFOLIOS WILL PROBABLY REFLECT VOTE-GETTING ABILITIES OF GERAKAN AND MCA IN

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